



# USS LST-261

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Builder: American Bridge Company in Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 22 May 1943

Decommissioned: 22 February 1946

Disposition: Sold for scrap.

Length: 327' 9" oa

Beam: 50'

Draft: 1' 6" bow, 7' 5" stern (unloaded); 8' 2" bow, 14' 1" stern (loaded -- at sea); 3' 1" bow, 9' 6" (loaded -- beaching)

Displacement: 1,625 (light); 4,080 (w/ full load of 2,100 tons)

Propulsion: 2 x General Motors 12-567 diesels, twin shafts/rudders

Range: 24,000 nm @ 9 knots

Top Speed: 11.6 knots

Complement: 111

Troops: 163

Armament: 7 x 40mm (single mount); 6 x 20 mm (single mount); 2 x .50-caliber mgs; 4 x .30-caliber mgs

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## Commanding Officers:

LCDR L. I. Reilly: 22 May 1943 - August 1944

LT Joseph V. Ferguson, USCGR: August 1944 - October 1944

LT W. S. Parrish, USCGR: October 1944 - July 1945

LT D. G. Olney, USCGR: July 1945 - 22 February 1946

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## History:

### **USS LST-261**

#### ***LST Flotilla 17, Group 51, Division 102***

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-261* was laid down on 7 September 1942 at the American Bridge Company in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. She was launched on 23 January 1943 and entered commissioned service on 22 May 1943 under the command of LCDR L. I. Reilly, USCG.

She sailed from Norfolk on 27 July 1943 en route to Oran, Algeria, arriving there on 20 August 1943, with LST Group 10 for Bizerte, Tunisia, arriving on 23 August 1943. On the 31st she got underway to join convoy MKS-23. On 9 September 1943, she carried tanks and troops from Sicily to Tarento and the east coast of Italy, making the farthest north landing on that coast at Manfredonia, near Foggia, Italy, in company of mixed British and American LSTs.

Subsequently in November, 1943, with nine other LSTs, she proceeded through the Suez Canal, being the first American man-of-war to enter the canal since the outbreak of the war. Carrying U. S. Army units and the *LCT-449* and crew to India to participate in the invasion of Burma, *LST-261* was held up at Ceylon due to main engine trouble. She was the first American ship-of-war to enter Colombo, Ceylon, in World War II. After waiting for six weeks for a repair part that never arrived, she was ordered to return to England. On only one engine, and unescorted, she retraced her track over the Indian Ocean and through the Suez Canal, still with *LCT-449* on her deck, and proceeded to England.

Arriving in England on 21 February 1944 she proceeded to various Irish, Scotch and South England ports readying for the Normandy Invasion, ending up at Harwich on the east coast, again under the British in a mixed group of LSTs, half-American and half-British. Sailing from Harwich on 5 June 1944, for the invasion of Normandy, she arrived off Arromanche on D-Day, 6 June 1944, carrying between five and six hundred men, including "Montgomery's Desert Rats," and tankers of British 8th Army fame. From then on she made altogether 52 channel crossings, carrying all types of equipment and men, British, Belgian, French and American to France. She was bombed without damage; took a mine close aboard on the port quarter, necessitating some hand steering to get back to England; had some casualties on her main deck who later got their Purple Hearts; and was rammed by a British merchantman in a dense fog. This laid her up 19 days for repairs just outside London.

Departing Falmouth, England, on 7 June 1945, one one year and a day after the Normandy invasion, she arrived at Norfolk on 20 June 1945 and New York on the 28th. She remained at New York until 20 September 1945 for availability, after which she proceeded to sail for New Orleans. She took part in the Navy Day

Celebration at Louisville, Kentucky. On 2 November 1945, she departed Louisville for New Orleans, having been visited by 41,000 people.

She was decommissioned at New Orleans on 22 February 1946. She was struck from the Naval Register on 28 March 1946 and sold for scrap on 10 November 1947 to the Biloxi Boat Wrecking Company in Biloxi, Mississippi.

The *LST-261* was awarded one battle star for her service during World War II.

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### **Photographs:**

None available.

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### **Sources:**

LST files, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

United States Coast Guard. *The Coast Guard At War. V. Transports and Escorts. Vol. 2.* Washington: Public Information Division, Historical Section, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 1, 1949, pp. 66-116.

United States Navy. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.* Volume VII. Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1981, pp. 574-742.

